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between us was insensibly eased by the prospect of a further exchange of views.

It was already dark when we made an end of our discussions, but Abas Kupi none the less decided that we should move that same evening to another village. I thought at first that this was a precaution against surprise attacks but, on enquiry, was told the simpler truth: in the two days that we had been there the bodyguard had devoured such food as the village could spare and no more could be obtained for the evening meal without straining the loyalty of the inhabitants. Hunger indeed was the sternest taskmaster of the guerillas, and the struggle to find food kept them continually on the move. We set out, therefore, into the night and, after an hour's march, came to a village where I was lodged with Abas Kupi and his staff in a large, two-storied house.

A blizzard sprang up in the night and we woke to find the face of the mountains whitened with snow. I was impatient to join Maclean and discuss my impressions with him, but the fury of the elements kept us indoors all day. By next morning, however, the gale had dropped; I therefore took leave of Abas Kupi and, crossing the range, rode back into the camp at dusk.

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TWELVE days had passed since we had landed in Albania and we had by now reorganised the network of British Missions and assured our own mobility and communications with Headquarters. Our next task was to complete a reconnaissance of the situation which confronted us. According to our information there were some twenty-five thousand German troops in Albania, belonging, most of them, to the XXI Mountain Corps. The Corps Headquarters were in Tirana, and controlled the 297th Infantry Division, deployed in Central and Southern Albania, and the 181st Mountain Division, based on Scutari.[1] There were besides some units in the South belonging to the

[1] The 181st Mountain Division was also responsible for internal security in Southern Montenegro.

264 least 15, with as many more waiting patiently for second table, and the dishes included a whole roast sheep, which the Major picked apart with his hands and distributed.

463 252 265 Professional cooks are found only in the towns and in new government stations. In Prizren and Scutari, many of these cooks are Turks and their dishes consist mostly of mutton with various kinds of vegetables. Personally I found this cuisine very tasty. They also make a fine *yughurt*. Pastry cooks form another special group, and concentrate on *baklava* and *kadaif*, the two honey desserts familiar to eaters in Greek restaurants in all countries. Although their products may be carried into the mountains, the pastry cooks themselves stay at home.

262 The mountaineers obtain almost all of their own food by farming and herding. Hunting provides little or none for most families, and the same is true of fishing. Along the Black Drin, just above Kukës, a few fish are sometimes caught, and welcomed in the kitchen. In Prizren, fresh river fish are sold in the market. But fish is an insignificant element in the Mountain Gheg diet. The same is true of wild vegetable products, shoots, berries, and the like, collected by women. Furthermore each family produces practically all of its own food, except for a little coffee and tea, and a bit of sugar and salt. Most families are too poor to afford these imported luxuries often. The significance of the absolute self-sufficiency of the Ghegs in their food supply is linked with local differences in geology, and must have a profound effect upon differences in physique attendant on diet.

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241 [594] Farming is a family affair. The man buys the iron implements which he needs in town, and makes the rest of wood. He breaks the soil with a spade, and ploughs it with oxen. As he ploughs each furrow, his wife walks behind him with a basket of seed, sowing it. Later the women will do the weeding, and the whole family comes out to reap. If the crop is wheat, they cut off each head of grain with a sickle and put the heads in a bag; if maize, they pick the ears and braid the husks for drying. They thresh small grains and beans with flails. When the tobacco leaves are ripe, the men cut them carefully and hang them on their verandas or the sides of their houses to cure.

cure. The Mountain Ghegs also grow much fruit on trees near their houses. The chief species are quinces, pears, and apples.

Women have charge of milking the cows and making butter, curds, and cheese. Small boys are usually employed as shepherds, and lead their flocks high on the mountains. In the summertime many Gheg families drive their cattle up to the Alpine meadows on the mountain passes, and keep them there weeks at a time while they make butter and cheese. While on these heights they live in small temporary houses (fig. 8, *c*).[1] The people of Klementi, however, who live in high valleys, drive their flocks to the plain of Scutari every year for winter pasture.

Animal husbandry furnishes the Ghegs not only with much of their food, but also with a supply of energy, for they use oxen in ploughing, and horses for travel and the transport of goods. In the wintertime they keep their cows and horses indoors, while the pigs, in Catholic regions, have special sties. Late winter and early spring is the season when food is scarce. The corncrib may be empty, and only the seed corn hanging in bunches from the walls will remain untouched. The cows are dry, and the flitches of pork and bacon gone from the ceiling.

This is the time when the mountain people, their tempers more and more irritable, used to turn to raiding, and while some rustled each other's animals, others came down out of the mountains to steal cattle from the people on the plains. Mirdita raided Zadrima, and Mati raided the low country around Elbasan. This annual hunger was the result of a complete economic occupance of the land, coupled with an excess of births over deaths. Raiding brought in more food, but feuding caused more deaths. Between the two, plus a certain amount of emigration, the balance was reached.

Transportation in Ghegnia was, in 1929, as poor as anywhere in Europe. There were a certain number of roads over which people could walk, in some places ride animals, and in most, carry goods on animal back. In a few places the trails were too steep for animals, and men had to pack in goods by pannier. The principal road, which will be described later,[2] goes from Scutari and Lesh by way of Vau i Dejës to Puka, then on to Kukës, and across

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1 [see cat. 116, p. 108 - Analyst
2 [see cat. 116 p 42a - Analyst]